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VA Health Care Upstate New York
VA Western New York Healthcare System
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**VA WESTERN NEW YORK HEALTHCARE SYSTEM HOLDS
FOUR CHAPLAINS INTERFAITH SERVICE**

VA Western New York Healthcare System will hold a remembrance service for Veterans, employees and the community on Sunday, February 3 at 2 p.m. in Freedom Hall at the Buffalo site, 3495 Bailey Avenue, to honor four chaplains who lost their lives in an extraordinary act of heroism during World War II. Father Michael Putich, Catholic Chaplain, will deliver the keynote address.

At this special event, the Legion of Honor award presentation will also take place. The Legion of Honor Award program publicly recognizes and honors outstanding members of society whose lives model the giving spirit and unconditional service to community, nation, and humanity without regard to race, religion, or creed exemplified so dramatically by the Four Chaplains. Recipients of the award will be Janet M. Ensmenger, of Cheektowaga and Jason C. Jaskula, of Hamburg.

The four chaplains, a Methodist Minister, Jewish Rabbi, Dutch Reformed Church Minister, and Catholic Priest were on a US Army transport ship that was hit by a German torpedo off the icy waters of Greenland in February 1943. When it became apparent there were not enough life jackets, the four US Army Chaplains removed theirs and handed them to frightened young soldiers, choosing to go down with the ship. They locked arms together and prayed in the tradition of their own faith. Of the 902 on board, there were only 227 survivors. The chaplains demonstrated throughout the voyage and in their last moments, interfaith compassion in their relationship with the men on board and with each other.

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